

Annual report 2008

Introduction

To create a better balance between the poor and the rich - this is how you can summarize the mission of the Homeless Child Foundation. This mission is more topical than ever after the turmoil of 2008, in which food and fuel prices have risen to unprecedented levels, especially in poor countries like Honduras, causing social upheaval.

Through this annual report we would like to inform you of our organisation, of how we aspired to transform our mission statement into tangible action in 2008, and of expectations for the future.

After we raised a considerable amount of funds in 2007, thanks to a couple of extraordinary contributions, it is clear that, despite the lack of such contributions in 2008, Homeless Child continued growing, and contributions of private persons as well as companies and organisations have steadily grown.

In Honduras, the foundations of cooperation with our most important partner, Proniño, have been fortified, and the collaboration with our partner Hogar Suyapa has expanded, as well as with our new partner AHMF, which is dedicated to women.

Goals, policy, and strategy

De voornaamste doelstelling van Homeless Child is om verwaarloosde kinderen een gedegen kans op een betere toekomst te bieden. The main goal of Homeless Child is to offer neglected children a decent chance of a better future. The strategy consists of developing a complete and durable program that provides a shelter for children of both sexes and of all ages.

This means that if we give a helping hand to these children, we take care of them until they have found a family where they can feel at home, or until they can participate fully in society as independent adults.

Since 2007 this has also been reflected in a program for prevention, in which the poorest women of the city where we work are assisted with sexual education and family planning, so they can determine for themselves how many children they can and want to nurture.

By focusing a part of our activities on prevention, we think we can have a more significant impact on the improvement of the social circumstances of children living in the city where we are active - El Progreso, Honduras.

The basis for our strategy lies in change coming from the local population, and their own initiative to implement improvements. This guarantees that projects are not pushed to the outside, and that changes sink in better. Homeless Child plays a supporting and accompanying part in this.

The complete policy can be consulted via the organisation or on the website. Subscribers to the newsletter receive an automated message as soon as new circumstances necessitate a change in policy.

Organisation, decision-making, and governance

Organisation

The Homeless Child organisation consists of a committee, a director, and a growing number of active volunteers.

Committee

On January 1, 2008 the committee consisted of the following people:

- * Chairman: Charles Duijne (retired pharmacist)
- * Secretary: Nicole van Rijmenam (tax lawyer)
- * Treasurer: Theo Zwart (retired entrepreneur)
- * Committee member: Ineke Wiersma (dental nurse)

On April 26, 2008 Lili Mostard joined the committee. She took over the secretariat from Nicole van Rijmenam, who began to focus on general administrative matters.

The members of the committee fulfill their tasks on a voluntary basis, and do not receive an allowance for their function, nor for their expenses. The total work force of the committee members consists of 1 FTE (full-time equivalent). They are chosen for a period of five years, and can stand as a candidate once more for a second period of another five years.



Bas Wiersma, the director and also the founder of the organisation, does not receive an allowance either, not even for the time or costs related to his annual stay in Honduras for three to six months. His total working time consists of 0.75 FTE, with which he reaches the maximum of his availability.

Volunteers

Apart from the committee and the director, Homeless Child can count on a number of active volunteers, the core of which consists of the following people:

- * Christi Norde: fund-raising, also active in Honduras.
- * César Gómez-Mora: website.
- * Rosemarie Hordijk: volunteers, also active in Honduras.
- * Greet en Gerrit Klein Kranenbarg: fund-raising, also active in Honduras.
- * Evelien de Wit: preparing educational material for informational activities in schools, also active in Honduras.

Apart from this core group, a growing number of volunteers commit themselves occasionally to Homeless Child. All these volunteers dedicate themselves to Homeless Child on their own account as well.

During the annual team day, everyone who has worked for the cause of Homeless Child can meet and share experiences and opinions.

Decision-making

The Homeless Child team prefers to communicate through e-mail, in order to make everyday decisions efficiently and in consultation. However, the most important decision making happens during meetings. In 2008 the committee had four meetings, two of them with the director present.

Important decisions made in 2008:

- The organisation wishes to continue on a path of gradual professionalization, and to that end will attract new committee members, and will create distinct job specifications and responsibilities.
- It was decided that the program for sexual education and family planning, in cooperation with partner AHMF, will be expanded, based on the successful pilot in 2007. More information can be found, below, in this report.
- In 2008, the organisation stuck to the policy that all expenses will be carried by the team members themselves, but it was also decided that from 2009 a maximum of 5% of all non-private gifts can be used for expenses made.
- On a request from partner Proniño, Homeless Child will support them in starting up the fourth phase of their care program. More information can be found, below, in this report.

All decisions, as well as minutes and other meeting documents, are available on demand from the secretary of the organisation.

Governance

The director of Homeless Child is active as an independent worker in a seasonal branch of trade. This allows him to work on his own account in Honduras, for a maximum of six months every year.

The director gives account to the committee through monthly reports. The committee granted the director a mandate to consider the best use for the remaining funds during his stay in Honduras, in consultation with the leaderships of the local partner organisations, in order to achieve the goals of Homeless Child and its partners. Only after consultation and consent of the committee in the Netherlands, will agreements be made.

The director also has the authority to spend an amount of maximum 2,000 Euros on projects in Honduras, three times a year, without having to ask the approval of the committee, provided that afterwards he can offer complete justification of the expenditure.

Committee members regularly pay a working visit (one or two members every year). Furthermore, some 10 to 20 Dutch volunteers and visitors annually come to Honduras to work on location, which creates a transparent, open culture.

In the case of collaboration with Wilde Ganzen, NCDO, and/or similar organisations, an elaborate application for approval needs to be shown prior to the project, and after the project a report needs to be handed in to be evaluated by these organisations. For other major contributors and large projects as well, a proposition is handed in, in advance, with a report to the contributor in question afterwards. Furthermore, expenditures are justified through the website, newsletters, events, and the annual report.

Activities and fund-raising in the Netherlands

All activities of Homeless Child in the Netherlands are intended to extend the basis of the struggle against poverty, and to create awareness for the part the Dutch population can play in this. Furthermore, most activities are related to fund-raising, in order to fund the necessary financial support in Honduras.

Especially through personal networking and through slide shows and communication in different media, we give attention to the importance of structural contributions, to guarantee the continuity of collaboration with partners.

The strategy of the organisation does not include sending mailings or contacting possible contributors by phone. In 2008 however, we started to use an authorisation form that is distributed during slide shows and other events. So far this method did not really bear fruit; possibly the organisation is still too modest in this matter, or the audience prefers a more personal approach.

Also in 2008, contributors were attracted actively for structural contributions through notarial deeds, which led to three new deeds. Online fund-raising is still in its infancy. Thanks to participation of the contribution module of 'Geef Gratis' - a Dutch website for charities - on average 1 or 2 contributions are made through this channel each month. The organisation did not see means to increase the share of online contributions.

The number of regular contributors has increased slightly thanks to the attention paid to the importance of continuity. Most funds are raised during slide shows and activities, or through the support of people who visited Honduras.

Given that in 2008 nearly all expenses for the organisation were carried by the team members, the percentage of fund-raising, overhead and other costs weighing in on the budget is practically nothing. A specific code of conduct for fund-raising has not been drawn up. However, before an event, there is deliberation on possible preferences of spending, and there is an agreement on the way of reporting. Reporting is always backed up by pictures, and if so desired, receipts and invoices.

Communication

To spread the message of balance on earth successfully, it is important to express oneself in concrete terms. This way, communication focuses on practical goals and is connected to results.

The website is an important way of communicating, which is deployed ever more efficiently. For instance, in 2008 a steadier rhythm of sending newsletters was introduced, and the rebuilding of the website was started. When the new website is finished in the course of 2009, more concerned people will be able to add information to the site more easily, which will benefit the topicality. Furthermore, from now on video can be added as well, and a more interactive approach is being developed. Ultimately the website will become more user-friendly.

In the summer of 2008, a TV documentary was made, that was broadcast in the fall on several channels (TV Eijsden - 14,000 viewers, L1 - 300,000 viewers, Goed TV - continuously, number of viewers yet unknown). This 19 minute documentary shows a clear image of the activities of Homeless Child, and the incentives behind them. On the same DVD there is also coverage of all the improvements made since the last documentary of 2004. This way, our audience can see very specifically what has been achieved with all contributions and support. Furthermore, this documentary is used during events, and will occur in short presentations on the website and on YouTube.

Events are an important means to form new alliances, and tighten the existing bonds. Service clubs are a point of particular interest, and therefore presentations have been held at Rotary Winterswijk, Lions Vianen, and Soroptimists Wijchen. The organisation is working on a program for school education in 2009, and has already informed six classes thanks to a cd-rom with a quiz and some games. In conclusion, Homeless Child is often included in personal happenings, such as baptisms, birthdays, anniversaries, and retirements, where gifts are more and more often replaced by contributions.

Every four months a digital newsletter is sent to approximately 370 subscribers, consisting of contributors as well as other interested people. It contains all the latest developments. This way, the annual report and the policy plan are shared with our supporters as well. The annual social and financial report and the policy plan are published on the website, and are available on request at the organisation as well.



We received only one complaint, concerning a wrongly processed change in bank details of a contributor.

Results

Social

In 2008 more visitors and volunteers came to Honduras than in any of the preceding years. The director of Homeless Child has been working on site for six months this year, three committee members came on a working visit, and about fifteen people came for a visit. Three volunteers from partner organisations have resided and worked in Honduras for three to twelve weeks as well.

This increasing number of visits has led to an impulse for the organisation in the Netherlands, since every visitor returned with such enthusiasm that he or she started a collection of funds or goods. In the mean time, one of them has taken on the function of regular volunteering within the organisation.

This way the number of events organized, and with that the number of contributions, has increased. The organisation still does not really succeed in increasing the number of steady contributors significantly however, so this remains an action item for the years to come.

Ties with companies have further been strengthened. Christi Norde, owner of Energy Incentives, shares a part of her profit with the organisation, partly through cash contributions, partly through contributions in kind, which she purchases upon her yearly visit to Honduras. Zoover has placed a banner of Homeless Child for free, Dick Smits Drukwerk has been the organisation's established printer, and again has printed a couple of articles for free this year, as well as postcards sold by the organisation. Netmatch provides hosting for the website in the form of a contribution, Notary office Van Weeghel Doppenberg Kamps contributes the notarial acts, and several retailers from the town of Eijdsden have contributed financially to the making of the documentary.

The trend of conducting business in a socially justified way is tangible, and Homeless Child intends to be even more active in this field in the near future. In 2008 an agreement was made between www.ots.nl and our partner Proniño, on the basis that OTS will finance the education of 22 of their children for two to three years. Given that the first year has been successful, the number of children has been increased to 29. OTS is demanding concerning assessments and reports, and this helps Homeless Child as well as Proniño to raise the stakes and to improve our own assessments.

For instance, Homeless Child is working on the implementation of assessments in order to measure results more efficiently. When projects are done with NCDO and/or Wilde Ganzen, extensive assessment is compulsory, making measurement of results necessary. In 2008, the measuring of results for investments in new projects has been started.

For example, in cooperation with AHMF (education and family planning for poor women), exact numbers are stored of how many women come to each education session, how many of them decide to engage in family planning, and how much this costs per participant. Hogar Suyapa keeps a record of exactly how many children are taken into the dietary centre and for how long, and through a medical follow-up of the children after their departure, the evolution of their health can be tracked precisely.

In 2009, more attention will be paid to processes of assessment and measurement of results.

Financial

The financial results are shown in detail in the annual financial report (PDF). Chapter seven of this annual social report illustrates the expenditures per partner in Honduras.

2008 has started off prosperously with a contribution of 10,000 Euros in February, by the Willemsen Foundation. Rotary Winterswijk, a service club supporting Homeless Child for 5 years now, has contributed over 13,000 Euros this year.



NCDO has decided to sponsor the documentary for 50%, and all other costs for the making have been covered by other contributors.

Special gifts from 2007 not considered, the revenue from contributions has increased over 5% in 2008.

Activities in Honduras

Asociación Hondureña de la Mujer y Familia (AHMF)

Activities

With the support of Homeless Child, AHMF started up a programme in 2007, providing information to the poorest women in the community about women's rights, sexual education and family planning. As part of this programme, contraceptives were available at a very low price to those wishing to use them.



After a successful pilot that lasted until April 2008, it was decided to continue with the programme and to expand it with one offering vocational training and micro credit, thus providing these women with an opportunity to improve their standard of living.

Expenditure

The \$5,000 which was made available in September 2007 was mainly spent in 2008. Only at the end of the year was a supplement of \$3,000 provided in order to continue with the programme in 2009.

Results and a Look Ahead

The organization of the programme was fraught with major obstacles. It turned out that women were often embarrassed to take part in a programme providing sexual education or they were forbidden by their partners to accept the invitation. Those who did come were often too shy to ask questions, let alone admit to other people in the neighbourhood that they wished to participate in family planning.

The doctor concerned demonstrated great patience and resourcefulness and, in the end, the information programme was received enthusiastically. However, in order to attract more people it was necessary to visit most districts more than once and to offer drinks and cakes. It was also decided to pay more attention to providing information about women's diseases (disorders of the womb, breast cancer etc.) as well as women's rights, so that women had less to fear in taking part. Even some men were regularly present during the sessions.

At the end of 2008, 14 women had chosen to be sterilised and 104 women were using varying forms of contraception. There was a conscious decision to let the women make a small monthly contribution (approximately 1 euro a month). This was done to prevent the local church authorities from branding the programme as compulsory, but above all to encourage those who actually wished to participate and to increase the self-respect of the women taking part.



In 2009, this programme will be pursued in the poorest districts of El Progreso. It is hoped that at the end of 2009, 250 women will be taking part. In addition, the programme will be expanded to include vocational training. A local female coordinator has been taken on to set up a programme offering nine vocational training courses (such as pedicure and jewellery making), designed to fit in with the local business market. Supporting workshops will be given concerning themes such as domestic violence, self-respect and hygiene.

There will also be a supplementary micro credit programme in addition to the vocational training. For this purpose Homeless Child has decided to make use of the services and know-how of a local bank, Pro Credit, which has a good track record in this field. This bank was established using capital from the German and Dutch Post Code Lotteries among others and has a strong social character. The micro credit programme will only begin when the first group of ladies has finished the vocational training.



Hogar Suyapa

Activities

Hogar Suyapa consists of a dietary centre and an orphanage. The organisation is part of the local Catholic Church and as such has access to all districts and district chapels. Through this intensive contact with residents, a basis of trust has been established and severely malnourished babies and toddlers come quickly to the attention of the organisation. After judgment by the juvenile court, they can be taken to hospital if necessary and then they are sent to the dietary centre, where they stay for six months on average.

Children who cannot return to their families or children who do not have a family any more are taken care of at the orphanage, possibly after a stay at the dietary centre. New families are sought for them but in most cases not found. Therefore, most children grow up in the orphanage and stay there until they become adults.

As the orphanage was only opened in 2004 and only a few very young children were taken into care, the two oldest girls in 2008 are only seven years old.

Expenditure

In 2008, Homeless Child donated 2,300 Euros for the acquisition of educational materials for the orphanage, as well as 3,800 Euros for a playground.

In addition, as a result of the extension to the orphanage by the building of a new storey, the foundation also decided to contribute to the operational costs of Hogar Suyapa from 2008. In 2008, the sum of 4,100 Euros was spent on this in the form of a matching grant. Local donations were doubled by Homeless Child. This initiative has clearly paved the way for an increase in local contributions.

Results and a Look Ahead

In particular, the sharp increase in food and fuel prices has hit countries like Honduras much harder than the Netherlands and has had a negative influence on the number of children who are malnourished or who otherwise need outside help. Pressure on Hogar Suyapa's capacity has therefore further increased in 2008.

The dietary centre can take care of 28 children at the same time and they stay there on average for about six months. The staff works the whole year at full capacity. This period of pressure has also had an effect on the participation and information programme for parents. In principal, the closest family member (usually the mother or grandmother) is asked to come and help one day a week at the dietary centre and this led to a degree of participation of 60% in 2007. The remaining children did not have parents or their parents did not turn up. This percentage fell to 40% in 2008 because an increasing number of children from cities situated further away were sent to the dietary centre by child welfare. The percentage for local children has remained at 60%.

After a stay at the dietary centre, children returning to the parental home need to return to the district for a monthly check up for the following two years. In 2007, 85% of the parents complied with this and from this group 100% of the children remain in good health. In 2008, this percentage rose to 90% for the local children and, for children living further away, it was not possible to set up an additional programme. In 2008, the number of children in the orphanage rose from 19 to 25 and the number of children being taken care of temporarily varied between 2 and 6. As the orphanage has a capacity for 60 children, there is ample space, but ideally the orphanage would like to limit growth to 3 or 4 children a year, so that they have enough time to raise more funds and find new staff. Here, too, the desired number has been exceeded because of the effects the severe price increases are having on the poorest people.

As the Honduras economy is very dependent on that of the United States, there has been a clear deterioration during the second half of the year, in particular, as a result of the worldwide economic crisis and it looks now as if the situation will deteriorate still further in 2009. As Hogar Suyapa receives 90% of its donations from these two countries, it will be very cautious with its funds and in the acceptance of new children.



In 2009, Homeless Child will raise the amount of \$6,000 for the matching grants to \$9,000. By applying this method, the local donor base will be further strengthened and they will not be dependent upon continuous support from Homeless Child. At the same time, this rise will be a small but welcome support in helping to bear the rising costs.

Proniño

Activities

Proniño vangt straatjongens op vanaf hun zesde tot hun veertiende jaar en die, als ze eenmaal zijn opgenomen, kunnen blijven tot ze Proniño takes care of street children from the age of six until fourteen and, once they have been taken into care, they can stay until they have become independent adults ready to take their place in society. In 2008, the programme consists of three phases:

Las Flores: a rehabilitation centre where the child can leave drugs behind him and can get used to a regular and disciplined life. They work here with a closed-door policy.

La Esperanza: an interim period in which the child stays for a shorter time to prepare himself for a life of going to school with more freedom and responsibility. This phase was started in October 2007 to ease the way for the transition from rehabilitation to school life.

La Montaña: a permanent centre where vocational training is given. The boys who live here go to school in the city.

Expenditure

In 2008, Homeless Child gave \$49,380 (€34,000) in structural support particularly for salaries, education, food and healthcare and this equals 35% of the total support that Proniño structurally receives. The amount is \$15,000 higher than the amount in 2007. The main reasons for this are that Homeless Child raised the fixed contribution by \$6,000 on an annual basis, to be able to shoulder the rising costs and to pay a salary of \$8,500 to a psychologist, who is helping to make further improvements to the care programme. In this way Homeless Child paid a little less than 40% of the total structural costs in 2008.

Two American organisations each pay 25 to 30% and 5% comes from Honduras.

Homeless Child has also made a number of incidental donations, including a gift of €5,075 to improve the vocational training in jewellery making, making a small library ready for use, and a joint contribution to a gym for the older boys. Other small donations have also been made towards dental care, English lessons and a water purification system.

A complete overview of expenditure is included in the annual financial report.

Results and a Look Ahead

In 2007, six boys had obtained on average a nine in their school reports and, in 2008, this number had grown to ten. This concerns the younger class in particular. The boys who started secondary education in 2008 (the school year starts on 1 February) did not do well. Many of them started the Proniño programme at a relatively late age and appeared to have difficulties in continuing with their studies after finishing their primary education. Most of them found a low-paid job in the end because they did not see the point of studying any further.

For this reason, the supervision and education of the new classes has become even more important as well as assisting them in their transition into society. In 2008, a psychologist was therefore taken on to help with the organisation of a programme for the fourth phase in 2009. In cooperation with partners, Homeless Child will implement a fourth phase for independent supervised living to help the young people finish their studies, find work and look for a place to live. They plan to start building in May and to open this phase at the end of the school year on 1 November 2009, in time to supervise the search for a house and a job.

As an exception, two boys who were selected in 2008 to participate in private education have both done well. One of them was even allowed to skip a class halfway through the year. The Dutch organisation www.nots.nl has decided to sponsor the educational costs for them and 22 other children for a period of two to three years and as the first year was so successful they have decided to extend this to 25 children in public education and 4 for the private school.

The number of boys in care has risen sharply, in particular in the second half of the year. Indeed, in the city of El Progreso the number of street children decreased sharply, but because of growing poverty in the entire region the juvenile courts appealed frequently to Proniño to take more children into care as the year went on. Moreover, a centre for street children was closed in a neighbouring city in October and Proniño was put under severe pressure by the government to take in ten of their children without payment. Therefore, on 1 January there were 74 children and on 31 December at least 94.



This unforeseen increase is a source of concern, especially as Proniño's facilities and the number of employees are not prepared for the care of such a large group. It would be better if the number of children was to increase more slowly in order to offer a better standard of care to every child under their roof, but pressure from the authorities and the very human inclination not to leave a child to fend for himself make it difficult to stick to an ideal number.

In 2009, some relief is expected, thanks to the opening of the new phases, but the fact that extra funds will be necessary will have to be taken into account, as well as more and better trained employees in order to further strengthen the care programme.

In the light of the worldwide recession all the stops will have to be pulled out in order to offer extra support on top of that needed for existing obligations.

Look Ahead

The foundation has reached a point whereby the team needs to be enlarged, efficiency needs to be improved and tasks divided, to stimulate future growth. The director has gradually been spending an increasing amount of his time on his tasks and will have to delegate some of them to others.

In order to focus on this process, the foundation will be looking for one or two new committee members in 2009 and, in addition, a deputy director for a limited number of hours per week. This person will become the first paid employee within Homeless Child and ideally his salary will be sponsored or earned back by the extra funds that will have been raised.

This illustrates the ambition of the foundation to follow the path of professionalization and sustained activity in Honduras. The economic malaise, which hit Honduras in particular, means that in 2009 caution will have to be exercised in the making of investments in new projects, but it also points to the fact that support and cooperation in the coming years will certainly be necessary to realise our mission.

Part of this transitional process to a professional organisation is also the decision to devote a maximum of 5% of all non-private donations to the meeting of expenses and overheads. If the foundation were to continue with the policy of allowing team members to shoulder the cost of all expenses, it would be detrimental to the loyalty of volunteers and committee members and could hinder growth.

For more details about our policy intentions for the coming five years, we should like to refer you to our website.

In 2009, for the eighth year running and this time for a period of six months, the director will be staying in El Progreso, Honduras, to develop further the activities of Homeless Child there and to evaluate results. Various committee members will be going on a working visit for a few weeks during the year and various volunteers will be rolling up their sleeves to help with the various activities.

If the Dutch authorities (www.ncdo.nl) decide to participate in the building of the fourth phase at Proniño, just as Wilde Ganzen have decided to do, then this will become the largest project in 2009, clearly with an eye to improving the supervision of the young people who have to make the transition into society.

The most special event in 2009 will undoubtedly be the visit to the Netherlands of two Proniño boys, together with the founder, in May. They are part of the young class and have been selected on account of their motivation, achievements and behaviour. As children, they were just roaming the streets a few years ago and were victims of the bitterness of a disrupted society. Now one of them goes to the private school in El Progreso and both of them are growing up to become adults looking forward to a promising future, thanks to Proniño. For an 11-year-old drug addict plucked out of the gutter in an impoverished land, a journey to Holland for him is comparable to a trip to the moon for us. However, it is also the best proof of a little more balance in the world of the small, but tangible, success of the work we are accomplishing together.

